4: Pierson Z-4, 5 (1935-1937) 1967
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At Bahia in 1807, 1809, 1813, 1816, 1826, 1827, 1828, and 1830, slave revolts broke out, terminating in the serious Malê uprising of 1835. There existed here, particularly in the nineteenth century, a well-established group of Negro disciples of the prophet Mohammed. Here Nagô was for a long time a Negro lingua franca (or, to use the corresponding Portuguese expression, a *lingua geral*), and Nagô is still occasionally to be heard among some of the older blacks. Here one might have encountered in the years just preceding abolition in 1888 an interesting paradox: while at home Bahia clung tenaciously to slavery, she was known abroad for the eloquence of her abolition orators.[3] Here, also, one might have observed the gradual fusion of Catholic belief and ritual with African mythology and religious practice, evidences of which may be seen today in *candomblés*, or fetish-cult centers, like that of Gantois, for example, whose ceremonies have been carried on in the same sacred place for many decades.

In the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries Bahia became one of the world's great sugar centers where a small aristocracy, as is attested today by the pretentious edifices still standing, achieved great wealth. As early as 1587 there were forty-seven sugar *engenhos*[4] in and about Bahia, and

[3] See Luiz Anselmo da Fonseca, *A escravidão, o clero e o abolicionismo* (Bahia, 1887), *passim*. This book, although obviously written as abolition propaganda, cites names, places, and dates to support its contentions and does not overlook negative cases.

[4] Each *engenho* consisted of a sugar plantation and a mill for processing the cane. Those at Bahia often had a capacity of a thousand tons or more yearly. Each was largely a self-sustaining economic unit, dependent upon the labor of numbers of Negro slaves. H. Morse Stephens says (*Portugal* [New York, 1903], p. 228) that sugar cane was imported into Brazil from the Madeira Islands in 1548.

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Conversation is carried on in the Portuguese vernacular, with a limited vocabulary and numerous errors in grammar. Many words of African or native Indian origin are commonly heard. Transport is primitive. Here the fetish cult, and the attitudes, sentiments, and beliefs associated with it, gains its most zealous and faithful devotees. Here, cut off quite sharply from participation in the upper levels of European culture, live that portion of the population which the upper classes refer to as *o povo*, and who think of themselves as *os pobres* ("the poor").

The social gulf between the *pobres* of the valleys and the *ricos* of the ridges is wide and not easy to bridge. This is, of course, to be anticipated in a society with an aristocratic tradition whose upper circles still look somewhat askance upon manual labor and have always regarded education, family connection, and "good breeding" as indices of class. Attitudes in this respect have changed little since the time when the abolitionist Anselmo da Fonseca felt it necessary to apologize for including the name of "a man of the people," a humble Negro shoemaker, among the prominent upper-class abolitionists of Bahia, arguing that "intelligence, patriotism, and truth are not the privilege of any one class" and explaining that this particular individual had been more useful to the abolition cause than many "more noble."

The upper classes habitually refer to members of the lower classes as *trabalhadores* ("laborers"), *operarios* ("workers"), or *o povo baixo* ("common people") and humorously caricature them by a cartoon character known as Zé Povinho, an illiterate, stupid, and unprepossessing lout. To their children they often direct such phrases as "não seja gentinha" ("don't be like common people"), "não tenha modos de gentinha" ("don't take up the manners of common people"), "não ligue a (or *para*) povo miudo" ("don't attach yourself

4: Pierson Z-4, 5 (1935-1937) 1967
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some slave,[36] and many Negroes repeatedly refused to participate in the uprisings.[37] The disturbances were ordinarily led, as we have seen, by Mohammedan Haussás, said to be exceedingly spirited and resolute individuals,[38] who were either free blacks or semi-independent *negros de ganho*. Moreover, they lived for the most part in the city where life was less arduous than on the plantations and where there was, at the same time, more leisure for brooding over grievances and perfecting schemes of revolt. Since all insurrectionists spoke the same or quite similar languages and shared

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[36] Dantas Junior, in commenting on the revolt of 1807, repeats (*A Illustração* [Bahia], June, 1936) that on the night of the twenty-second of May (the revolt was set for 7:00 P.M. of the twenty-eighth) a "person of integrity" urgently sought out the governor at his palace and secretly informed him that "a Negro of mine told me that the slaves of the Ussá nation are plotting to revolt." Following the serious uprising of 1835, the provincial assembly rewarded (*Laws*, No. 344, August 5, 1848, and No. 405, August 2, 1850) the "free Africans," Duarte Mendes and his wife, Sabina da Cruz, with the cancellation of their taxes for having "informed on and thus prevented the success of the planned insurrection."

[37] "The Negroes of the warehouses belonging to Manoel Ignacio da Cunha and Francisco Lourenço Herculano did not wish to join the band" (Silva, *op. cit.*, p. 347). Wied Neuwied, who visited Bahia during the period of these uprisings, says that colored troops were used in suppressing them. See Prince Maximilian Wied Neuwied, *Viagem ao Brasil*, trans. from the German of *Reise nach Brasilien in den Jahren 1815 bis 1817* (2 vols.; Frankfurt, 1820), by Edgar Sussekind de Mendonça and Flavio Poppe de Figueiredo (São Paulo, 1940), pp. 450–51.

[38] Koster, noting that "Pernambuco has never experienced any serious revolt among the slaves; but at Bahia there have been several commotions," and convinced that "Bahia contains fewer free people than Pernambuco in proportion to the number of slaves," wrote, "I cannot avoid attributing the quietude of the latter in some measure to the circumstances of a few of the Gold Coast Negroes being imported into it, whilst at Bahia the principal stock of slaves is from that part of Africa. . . . . They are represented as possessing great firmness of mind and body, and ferociousness of disposition" (*op. cit.*, I, 214).

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the same or similar religious beliefs and practices, they were able to act effectively together.

In 1806, following a raid upon a "conspirator's house," the imprisonment of a number of suspected plotters, and the confiscation of "four hundred arrows, a bundle of sticks, and quantities of cord for the making of bows, a large number of knives and pistols, a gun and a drum," orders were issued to arrest every slave found in the streets after nine o'clock at night "without a letter from his master or in his company."[39] The following year correspondence between African conspirators in Bahia and Santo Amaro (a sugar center in the Reconcavo) was intercepted, and the leaders thus exposed were subsequently tried, sentenced to death, and executed.[40] About the same time the governor of Bahia ordered destroyed two troublesome *quilombos*, or settlements of fugitive slaves, on the outskirts of the city near Cabula and Nossa Senhora dos Mares, and the *capitãomor* with eighty soldiers surrounded their huts and took prisoner seventy-eight blacks, some of whom were free Negroes.[41]

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In 1809 a revolt about twelve miles from Bahia was put down after the Haussás had "committed all sorts of outrages."[42] In 1813 about five hundred Haussás revolted and fled into the surrounding country but were speedily pursued and disarmed and their leaders publicly hung on gallows erected in Praça Piedade, one of the principal squares of the city. Several others were deported to Africa.[43] In 1826 soldiers had to be sent to various points in the Reconcavo,

[39] Silva, *op. cit.*, p. 346.

[40] Alvares do Amaral, *Resumo chronologico da Bahia* (Bahia, n.d.), p. 111.

[41] Eduardo A. de Caldas Britto, "Levantes de pretos na Bahia," *Revista do Instituto Geographico e Historico da Bahia*, XXIX, 72.

[42] Alvares do Amaral, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 39. See also Ramos, *As culturas negras*, p. 337.

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seat of the iman, or head in Brazil of all African disciples of the prophet Mohammed. Those who were resident in Rio, Ceará, and Pernambuco owed allegiance to him. Incidentally, it was a time of general social unrest not only among certain of the slaves but among the whites as well.[46] The aim of the conspiracy was "to set up a queen after exterminating all the Europeans." Extensive plans were laid, including the proposed participation of slaves from "every part of the Reconcavo," many of whom, immediately preceding the night set for the uprising, fled from their owners and came to Bahia. A banner was adopted and the robes worn at Mohammedan ceremonies selected as costumes of war. The time chosen for the uprising was during the popular festival of Nossa Senhora da Guia, when most of the European population would be gathered at Bomfim, outside the main area of the city, houses would consequently be deserted by white owners, and slaves might go in and out without arousing suspicion.[47]

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The governor, forewarned by a faithful slave a few hours before the uprising actually occurred, doubled all police

[46] From 1831 to 1837 revolts against the Brazilian imperial government broke out in Pará, Sergipe, Pernambuco, and Rio Grande do Sul. In Maranhão three thousand slaves, led by an African named Cosme, had recently revolted.

[47] The report of the chief of police to the governor of the province of Bahia (republished from the *Diario da Bahia* in the *Jornal do Commercio* of Rio, February 10, 1835) said that the evidence indicated "the insurrection had been plotted for a considerable period of time with absolute secrecy. . . . . Almost all the leaders know how to read and to write in some unknown language, which appears to be Arabic. This is the same language which is used by the Ussás, who seem to be united today with the Nagôs. These Ussás are from the same tribe which has revolted on several occasions in this Province. . . . . Their leaders, among whom are many free and even wealthy Africans, stir up and organize revolts."

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CHAPTER III

CASA GRANDE AND *SENZALA*[1]

EVEN as late as the second quarter of the nineteenth century a visitor to Brazil wrote: "Again and again, while travelling in the interior, I have seen troops of new slaves of both sexes, who could not speak a single word of Portuguese, varying from twenty to one hundred individuals, marched inland for sale, or already belonging to proprietors of plantations."[2] These newly imported Africans were known as *negros novos*, or "new Negroes."[3]

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Since the major portion of African importations into Bahia came from contiguous territory in Africa, the Negroes ordinarily brought with them closely related dialects and, consequently, could more easily communicate among themselves in African tongues. Gradually there came into general use, especially among the influential semi-independent *negros de ganho*, an African language known as Nagô,[4] which by facilitating intercommunication intensified the Negroes' moral isolation from the white world and retarded the whole acculturation process. Nagô continued for a long time to

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[1] The "Big House" and the "slave quarters."

[2] George Gardner, *Travels in the Interior of Brazil, 1836–1841* (London, 1849), p. 12. [113]

[3] Nina Rodrigues, *Os africanos no Brasil* (São Paulo, 1932), p. 187. BB

[4] "Like the French, we in Bahia call Nagôs all Negroes from the Slave Coast who speak the Yoruba language. Of this group we have received slaves from all the smaller subdivisions, from Oyó the capital of Yoruba, from Ilorin, Ige-sha, Ibadan, Ifé, Iebú, Egba, Lagos, etc." (*ibid.*, p. 157). [101]

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be the *lingua geral*, or general Negro language.[5] The ritual of the more important fetish-cult centers was, and still is, carried on in this language. Inscriptions in Nagô were occasionally to be seen not only on cult buildings but also in small commercial establishments owned and operated by Negroes, like the meat stall on the Baixa dos Sapateiros over whose entrance Nina Rodrigues in 1895 noted the inscription "Kosi oba Kan afi Olorun."[6] So important did Nagô become, and so widespread its use that, although Nina Rodrigues early in the twentieth century estimated that there were only approximately five hundred Africans still living in the city and they were at that time dying at the rate of a hundred and fifty to two hundred a year,[7] one still today, more than three decades later, finds

[5] Nina Rodrigues, intimately acquainted for many years with Bahian Negroes, commends the accuracy of the Visconde de Porto Seguro when he says, "The best known Negroes in Brazil were those coming from the *Costa da Mina*, whence arrived the greater portion of those imported into Bahia; so that in this city many slaves learned little Portuguese but instead communicated among themselves in Nagô." About 1900 he himself wrote: "The Nagô dialect is commonly spoken in Bahia by almost all the old Africans from the various tribes and by a great number of creoles and mulattoes" (*op. cit.*, p. 197).

[6] Rodrigues translates the phrase: "There is no God but Olorun" (principal deity of the Nagô cult). A photograph of the entrance to the shop showing this inscription may be found in *ibid.*, opp. p. 202.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 154. In the seven years from 1896 to 1902, 1,982 Africans died at Bahia. The distribution was as follows:

Year	Total	Male	Female
1896	110	55	55
1897	258	156	102
1898	200	96	104
1899	209	110	99
1900	151	87	64
1901	152	74	78
1902	302	136	66
Total	1,382	714	568

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Nagô at times spoken in Bahia and an occasional individual whose command of this language is comparable to his command of Portuguese.

The nature of Negro settlement at Bahia favored to a considerable extent the preservation of African cultural forms. Tribal units were not deliberately broken up, as in Jamaica and the United States, and the Negro was thereby able to preserve and to transmit to his children a considerable portion of his African heritage. Even on the plantations the distribution of newly imported Africans among the old-established Negroes seems not to have occurred.[8] The concentration in the city of Bahia over a long period of time of large numbers of semi-independent *negros de ganho*, around whom there gradually accumulated a considerable number of relatively unassimilated free Negroes, also favored the persistence of African cultural elements.

It is likely that Nagô was not maintained in a pure form but came to be a patois containing numerous elements from other African dialects as well as from Portuguese. A Catholic missionary, Padre Coquard, visiting Bahia in 1899 to solicit funds, spoke to the colored population in Nagô. But the sermon, preached in the ancient church of Sé, was wholly ineffective.[9]

Other African languages were spoken in Bahia.[10] Rodrigues believed that Gêge (or Ewe) was used throughout the eighteenth century and until at least the middle of the nine-

[8] Henry Koster, *Travels in Brasil, 1809 to 1815* (2 vols.; Philadelphia, 1817), I, 229 n.

[9] Rodrigues, *op. cit.*, pp. 200–201. Perhaps another reason for this ineffectiveness was that the Negroes who were most able to understand Nagô were unassimilated Africans who, out of loyalty to the religion of their fathers, deliberately absented themselves from this ceremony of the Catholic church.

[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 197–230.

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teenth. Tapa and Haussá were spoken during the entire nineteenth century, and the latter perhaps long before 1800. Although the Haussás were relatively few in number, their influence was considerable. The slave revolts of the early nineteenth century were, as we have seen, led by this reputedly "most intellectual element" among the imported Africans, many of whom could read and write Arabic characters. Kanúri, spoken in Bahia by the Bornús, and Grúnce, the tongue used by the slaves known as Gallinhas, are included, along with Haussá, Gêge, and Tapa, in the limited vocabularies which Rodrigues collected from Bahian Negroes near the beginning of the twentieth century.[12] Tshi (or Odji), Gá (or Acrá),[13] and Mandê (or Mandinga) were also employed to a limited extent.

As late as 1900, Negro laborers in Bahia continued to wear "white vestments of coarse cotton cloth," which reminded Rodrigues of "the Nagô *camisús*."[14] The *Bahiana* costume,[15] of partial African origin, was extensively used by the Negro women. It was also customary for them to carry their babies bound to the back with a large cloth. African dishes, in the preparation of which *azeite de dendê* (oil of the *dendê* palm) and *pimenta da costa* (pepper from the West Coast) prominently figured, formed a considerable portion of the Negro diet.

At that time, also, African music might be frequently heard, particularly in the ceremonies of the *candomblé*. African musical instruments, like the *atabaque*, the *agê*, the *canzá*, the *marimba*, the *agôgô*, the *[illegible]axixi*, and the *xáque-xáque*[16] were commonly employed. The fetish cult drew allegiance from numerous and zealous devotees.

[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 217–21.

[13] Spoken in Bahia by the Ashantis. [14] *Op. cit.*, p. 181.

[15] The *Bahiana* costume is described in detail in chap. ix.

[16] These instruments are described in chap. ix.